Identification of BPL families

177. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the absence of identification of below poverty line families, the Public Distribution System in many States is on the verge of collapse;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has issued directions to State Governments to expedite the identification of BPL families and improve the functioning of PDS in the States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is implemented jointly by Government of India and State/UT Governments with sharing of responsibilities in this regard. The responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within State/UT, identification of eligible BPL & AAY families based on estimates of Planning Commission, issuance of ration cards to them, and supervision over distribution of allocated foodgrains to eligible ration card holders through fair price shops rest with the State/UT Governments.

State/UT Governments have to identify BPL families based on poverty estimates of Planning Commission. Presently 6.52 crore BPL families have been accepted for allocations of TPDS foodgrains. However, State/UT Governments have issued higher number of BPL ration cards due to exclusion and inclusion errors in their identification. For taking up next round of BPL census in rural and urban areas, Ministries of Rural Development and Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation have to issue guidelines.

To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has directed State & UT Governments to take up the following measures:

A. to strengthen monitoring and vigilance by-

i) implementation of the Nine Point Action Plan;

ii) taking action against those with Bogus Ration Cards; and

iii) ensuring greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)/Urban Local Bodies in functioning of Fair Price Shops.

B. to ensure increased transparency in functioning of TPDS by-

i) adoption and implementation of revised Model Citizens' Charter;

ii) introduction of monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops and their distribution to ration card holders:

iii) taking up publicity-cum-awareness Campaign on TPDS; and

iv) display of allocation of foodgrains - district and FPS wise on websites for public scrutiny.

C. to use ICT tools such as -

i) computerisation of TPDS Operations;

ii) pilot scheme on Smart Card based Operations in Haryana and Chandigarh;

iii) piloting of new technologies for tracking movement of vehicles transporting TPDS Commodities, and

D. to improve efficiency of FPS operations through-

i) doorstep delivery of foodgrains;

ii) ensuring timely availability of foodgrains;

iii) distribution of wheat flour/fortified wheat flour under TPDS;

iv) allotment of Fair Price Shops to Institutions and Groups;

v) sale of non-PDS items by FPS licensees, and

vi) revision of commission to FPS licensees.

Price-rise of sugar

178. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has amended the Essential Commodities Act (ECA) through an Ordinance providing for fixing the levy price of sugar at a fair and remunerative price;

(b) whether Government would use ECA to double PDS quota if sugar talks hit a deadlock;

(c) whether there is great pressure on Government to import sugar as soaring global prices and acute domestic supply pose problems for Government;

(d) whether rising sugar prices has caused problem for Government; and

(e) if so, the concrete steps and measures Government proposes to take in addition to Ordinance to improve sugar supply and also check price of sugar in country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The Central Government has amended the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 through an Ordinance, *inter alia*, for determining the levy price of sugar starting from the sugar season 2009-10 by taking into account the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane payable by sugar factories.

(b) There is no proposal to double the PDS quota of sugar. However, the Central Government has raised the levy sugar obligation of domestic producers of sugar from earlier 10% to 20% in respect of sugar produced in the current sugar season 2009-10 *vide* notification dated 7th October, 2009.